

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. **(Currently Amended)** An article for applying a coupling agent to a surface of a tissue or a body part, the article comprising:

a backing, **wherein the backing comprises a non-permeable material**; and
a layer of coupling agent over at least one major surface of the backing,
wherein the article is configured such that a predetermined amount of the layer of coupling agent is uniformly and useably transferrable to the surface of the tissue or the body part upon removal of the article from the tissue or the body part, wherein the predetermined amount of the layer of coupling agent ~~is an appropriate amount for enhancing~~ **enhances** optical and thermal coupling between the tissue or the body part and a separate measuring device including an optical probe.

2. **(Original)** The article of claim 1, wherein the coupling agent is selected from the group consisting of mineral oil, silicon oil, dimethyl siloxane, fluorocarbons, and glycols.

3. **(Canceled)**

4. **(Previously Presented)** The article of claim 1, wherein a thickness of the layer of coupling agent over the backing is less than about 100 μm .

5. **(Previously Presented)** The article of claim 1, wherein a thickness of the coupling agent over the backing is from about 7 μm to about 20 μm .

6. **(Original)** The article of claim 1, wherein the area of the backing is from about 10 cm^2 about 40 cm^2 .

7. **(Previously Presented)** The article of claim 1, wherein the backing has an area greater than an area of the layer of coupling agent.

8. **(Previously Presented)** The article of claim 1, further including a substrate layer interposed between the backing and the layer of coupling agent.

9. **(Original)** The article of claim 8, wherein the substrate layer comprises a fibrous material.

10. **(Original)** The article of claim 8, wherein the substrate layer comprises a non-fibrous material.

11. **(Currently Amended)** A method for improving the precision of a non-invasive optical measurement, said method comprising:

providing an article comprising:

a backing, wherein the backing comprises a non-permeable material; and

a layer of coupling agent over at least one major surface of the backing, the layer of coupling agent providing a surface on the article for contacting a tissue or a body part;

contacting the article to the surface of the tissue or the body part such that the layer of coupling agent contacts the tissue or the body part;

removing the article from the surface of the tissue or the body part, wherein upon the removing of the article, a specified amount of the layer of coupling agent is useably transferred to the surface of the tissue or the body part;

bringing an optical measuring device in contact with the useably transferred coupling agent and said tissue or said body part, wherein said useably transferred coupling agent enhances optical and thermal coupling between said device and said tissue or said body part; and

performing a non-invasive determination of the concentration of an analyte in said tissue or said body part.

12. **(Original)** The method of claim 11, wherein said optical measurement is one of diffuse reflectance measurements, localized reflectance measurements, time domain measurements, frequency domain measurement, photoacoustic measurements or optical coherence tomography measurements.

13. **(Previously Presented)** The method in claim 11, wherein said analyte is selected from the group consisting of glucose, hemoglobin, glycated hemoglobin, triglycerides, and cholesterol.

14. **(Previously Presented)** The method in claim 11, wherein the layer of coupling agent is uniform.

15. **(Previously Presented)** The article of claim 1, wherein the layer of coupling agent is uniform.

16. **(New)** An article for applying a coupling agent to a surface of a tissue or a body part, the article comprising:

- a backing;
- a layer of coupling agent over at least one major surface of the backing; and
- a substrate layer interposed between the backing and the layer of coupling agent;

wherein the article is configured such that a predetermined amount of the layer of coupling agent is uniformly and useably transferrable to the surface of the tissue or the body part upon removal of the article from the tissue or the body part, wherein the predetermined amount of the layer of coupling agent enhances optical and thermal coupling between the tissue or the body part and a separate measuring device including an optical probe.

17. **(New)** The article of claim 16, wherein the coupling agent is selected from the group consisting of mineral oil, silicon oil, dimethyl siloxane, fluorocarbons, and glycols.

18. **(New)** The article of claim 16, wherein the backing comprises a non-permeable material.

19. (New) The article of claim 16, wherein a thickness of the layer of coupling agent over the backing is less than about 100 μm .

20. (New) The article of claim 16, wherein a thickness of the coupling agent over the backing is from about 7 μm to about 20 μm .

21. (New) The article of claim 16, wherein the area of the backing is from about 10 cm^2 about 40 cm^2 .

22. (New) The article of claim 16, wherein the backing has an area greater than an area of the layer of coupling agent.

23. (New) The article of claim 16, wherein the substrate layer comprises a fibrous material.

24. (New) The article of claim 16, wherein the substrate layer comprises a non-fibrous material.

25. (New) The article of claim 16, wherein the layer of coupling agent is uniform.

26. (New) A method for improving the precision of a non-invasive optical measurement, said method comprising:

providing an article comprising:

a backing;

a layer of coupling agent over at least one major surface of the backing, the layer of coupling agent providing a surface on the article for contacting a tissue or a body part; and

a substrate layer interposed between the backing and the layer of coupling agent; contacting the article to the surface of the tissue or the body part such that the layer of coupling agent contacts the tissue or the body part;

removing the article from the surface of the tissue or the body part, wherein upon the removing of the article, a specified amount of the layer of coupling agent is usably transferred to the surface of the tissue or the body part;

bringing an optical measuring device in contact with the usably transferred coupling agent and said tissue or said body part, wherein said usably transferred coupling agent enhances optical and thermal coupling between said device and said tissue or said body part; and

performing a non-invasive determination of the concentration of an analyte in said tissue or said body part.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein said optical measurement is one of diffuse reflectance measurements, localized reflectance measurements, time domain measurements, frequency domain measurement, photoacoustic measurements or optical coherence tomography measurements.

28. (New) The method in claim 26, wherein said analyte is selected from the group consisting of glucose, hemoglobin, glycated hemoglobin, triglycerides, and cholesterol.

29. (New) The method in claim 26, wherein the layer of coupling agent is uniform.